

ports, per se. However, I do think that in any case of foreign ownership or operation of sensitive U.S. assets, we need to scrutinize these deals that could threaten our national security.

That should have happened in this case. In cases involving foreign ownership and national security, the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States provides for a second-level 45-day security review.

Despite concerns expressed by the Department of Homeland Security and the Coast Guard, that did not occur. Only now, after this controversy has erupted, has the administration agreed to review the deal. Why are both Democrats and Republicans raising objections?

Here are the facts that give us pause: first, the United Arab Emirates honors an Arab boycott of Israel, thereby discriminating against a valued U.S. friend and ally. Second, al Qaeda used the bank system in the United Arab Emirates to execute the 9/11 and the 1998 African Embassy bombings.

Third, the United Arab Emirates was one of three countries that recognized Afghanistan's brutal Taliban regime.

Four, the 9/11 Commission reports indicated that Osama bin Laden regularly met with United Arab Emirates officials in the camps in Afghanistan. Reports suggest that bin Laden may have, in fact, been tipped off by friends in the United Arab Emirates.

Simply put, the United Arab Emirates' record on terrorism is in fact mixed at best, and serious questions need to be asked about whether this company should be allowed port management.

Let us talk about specific concerns. Last week Joseph King, a former Bush administration official at Customs, said in a Washington Post interview that people's national security fears about the deal are well grounded.

He goes on to point out that under the deal, this company would have carte blanche-like authority to obtain hundreds of visas to relocate managers and other employees to the United States. Using appeals for solidarity or even threats of violence, al Qaeda operatives could force low-level managers to provide these visas to al Qaeda sympathizers.

According to recent articles in a December 13, 2005, intelligence assessment of the company and its owners, the United Arab Emirates, by the Coast Guard warned: "There are many intelligence gaps concerning the potential for Dubai Ports World or P&O assets to support terrorist operations that preclude" the completion of a thorough threat assessment.

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"The breadth of the intelligence gaps also infer potential unknown threats against a large number of potential vulnerabilities." That should give us pause.

Additionally, the Department of Homeland Security initially objected

to this deal. What are these intelligence gaps? How big are they? Have they been resolved? All questions we cannot answer right now.

Let me say this. The administration's announcement of this deal is chillingly akin to the administration's prewar intelligence on weapons of mass destruction. There the administration selectively tailored intelligence to support the invasion that it desired from the very beginning. Here, the administration seems to be ignoring, deliberately ignoring, red flags and cherry-picking positive intelligence to support approval of a ports deal that it already wants.

Let me conclude. Thankfully, Congress has put the brakes on this deal. We will be taking a long, serious and hard look at this arrangement. Unfortunately, the Bush administration has already made up its mind to support the deal even before a serious review has begun, and that is not in the best interest of the United States.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR AMERICAN COMPANIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WESTMORELAND). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, this Dubai ports deal will probably go through even though these types of contracts should be given to American-owned companies. But the deal will probably be approved with Congress passing some meaningless, feel-good limitations or restrictions and increasing funding for port security.

The deal will probably go through because, one, it involves \$6.8 billion and it is almost unheard of to stop a deal involving big money like that.

Secondly, the President and the entire administration are pushing it as hard as they can.

Third, the columnists and commentators are all piling on using words like "overreaction, racism and bigotry." Even though this is name-calling, rather than discussing the merits, most elected officials are going to do anything possible to avoid being called a racist or bigot or even that they are overreacting.

There are legitimate national security concerns here. The United Arab Emirates may be a strong ally now, but these things change. Our government considered Saddam Hussein as an ally all through the 1980s and supported him in a big way monetarily and in other ways.

While I am concerned about national security, my main concern about this deal is economic. We have far too many foreign companies operating our ports. These are some of the best and most lucrative contracts we have. They should be going to American-owned companies. If we give all these lucrative, big-money contracts to foreign-owned businesses, most of the profits and most of

the top jobs will go to people from those countries. At some point we need to start putting our own businesses and shareholders and workers first. After all, the first obligation of the U.S. Congress should be to the American people.

It is also of some concern that this deal is not with a private company, but with an organization owned or controlled by the Government of the United Arab Emirates. Let me emphasize, I have nothing whatsoever against anyone from any foreign country. I am certainly not anti-Arab. I think it is sad that a British-owned company was running these port operations, and I am not anti-British. I think we should be friends with the Arabs and the British, and I believe we should have trade with all countries. But I would want foreign countries to be buying things from American companies and vice versa. And I would like to see American ports, which are some of the most important infrastructure assets we have, to be run and controlled but American companies and American citizens.

I do not believe the Chinese or the Japanese or many other countries would let us run their ports. And most of these contracts to operate businesses on these ports are not advertised widely at all. Most are sweetheart, insider-type deals. I believe there are many American business people who would jump at the chance to do this business if they just knew about these opportunities.

Let us start putting our own people first once again and stop giving all this port business to so many foreign companies or especially not to foreign governments.

SECURING OUR NATION'S PORTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me say that in committee today we had the U.S. Coast Guard, and I want to commend them because after 9/11, they were the first agency within minutes to be on guard, guarding our bridges. And, in fact, after Katrina they were there and they did a yeoman's job. In fact, out of Homeland Security, FEMA, and the other agencies, it is the Coast Guard that really does a good job.

The administration's decision to allow the state-owned Dubai Ports to take over six major U.S. ports has bought the issue of port security to the forefront of national attention. Since September 11, in fact, I have been lobbying the Bush administration for additional security funds for our Nation's ports and other areas of our Nation's infrastructure, such as freight and passenger rail, our subway systems, buses, tunnels and bridges. They also need security.

To me, this funding is particularly needed in my State of Florida whose 14